(b) what other natural Indian products have been patented by foreign countries; and

(c) what steps Government have taken to stops this misappropriation of the natural wealth of India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) A patent has been granted by the United states Patent and Trade Marks Office vide patent No. 5,900,240 dated 4th May, 1999 regarding herbal compositions and their use a hypoglycemic agents.

(b) and (c) No, such information is maintained by the Government.

Patents are granted by respective Governments under their patent laws. Whenever information is received about the patents being taken on certain products which are not considered patentable, steps are taken to assess whether the grant of patent can be challenged.

Majority stake of US firms in Indian Joint Ventures

30. SHRI K.R. MALKANI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that U.S. firms are steadily acquiring majority stake in Indian Joint Ventures (vide Hindustan Times, dated 27th October, 1999);

(b) if so, a list of such ventures; and

(c) whether this does not amount to an erosion of our economic sovereignty?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) to (c) Sir, the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) has approved a total of 15382 Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) proposals in the post policy period i.e. from August, 1991 till July, 1999. Against this, the US firms have acquired majority stake only in about 142 Indian joint Ventures. The details of FDI proposals approved including proposals for acquisition of majority stake by US firms in Indian ventures are incorporated, from time to time, in Monthly SIA newsletters brought out by Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion, which are widely circulated including the Library of the House. The aforesaid acquisition of equity has taken place in conformity with the policy and guidelines for Foreign

Direct Investment (FDI) which provides adequate safeguards for development and growth of the Indian Industry.

Industries in Assam

31. DR. (SHRIMATI) JOYASREE GOSWAMI MAHANTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of industries/factories established in the State of" Assam as compared to the either States of the country during the last five years and till date in view of the economic and industrial development of the State;

(b) the total number of regions in the North-East which do not have industries, district-wise;

(c) whether Government have formulated any new policy to set up industries in Assam on priority basis;

(d) if so, what are the details of various proposals received from the private sector; and

(e) the steps Government propose to take in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) and (b) A state wise break up of Letters of intent (LOIs) converted into Industrial Licence (ILs) and Industrial Entrepreneurs memorandum (FEM) implemented in the non-small scale sector along with percentage during the last five years (January 1995—October 1999) is given in the enclosed Statement. *(See* below). District wise details of industries set up in the States are not centrally maintained.

(c) A new industrial policy for the North Eastern Region was notified on 24th December, 1997, wherein new industrial units have been exempted from income tax and excise duty for a period of 10 years; funding pattern of Growth Centres and Integrated Infrastructure Development Centre (IIDCs) have been revised Transport Subsidy Scheme has been extended upto 31.3.2007; and a scheme for Comprehensive Insurance for new industrial units in the North Eastern Region has been put in place.

(d) and (e) After announcement of the new policy for North Eastern States, 15 applications for grant of Letters of intent/Industrial Licence have been received and 11 IEMs have been filed for setting up of new industries in the private sector in the non-small scale sector. Private investment is mainly